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A2498 MAR 22 1941

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information

AND-19-41

Part I - STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

March 21, 1941

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AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

SUMMARY OF CABLES ON FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS: FRANCE: Reports from France indicate that (1) consumption in the "free zone" must be a hand-to-mouth process with deficits after the exhaustion of 1940 crops for such items as wheat, rye, barley, potatoes, and dried vegetables; (2) the production of fats in the "free zone" is inadequate to meet even the low current rations; and (3) the production of sugar in the "free zone" is negligible.

LIVESTOCK NUMBERS ARE BEING REDUCED STEADILY by forced slaughter because of feedstuff shortages, especially in the "free zone." As a result, meat reserves should remain adequate in both zones for a considerable period under present restrictions which limit total consumption by the civilian population and by the army of occupation to 60 percent of the average over the past 10 years. Such enforced slaughterings, however, are likely to result in grave meat shortages in about 14 months. Moreover, the slaughterings of milk cows will aggravate the existing shortage of milk, butter and cheese.

ITALY: Indications are that the Italian food situation will not be as favorable on July 1, 1941, as it was on July 1, 1940. While 1941 domestic production may be maintained at 1940 levels, it is likely that Italy will encounter difficulties in importing normally deficient foodstuffs. Authorities are urging increased production of wheat, oats, rice, potatoes, corn, legumes and oilseeds. Of these the domestic production of wheat, oats, legumes and oilseeds normally has to be supplemented by imports, mainly from the Danube Basin.

SHOULD THE DANUBE BASIN HAVE POOR CROPS IN 1941, or should Germany absorb excessive quantities of the Danubian supplies, Italy's situation would be precarious, especially with respect to wheat. At the present rate of consumption, Italian wheat stocks are reported as being sufficient to meet domestic requirements only up to May 1.

THE FEEDSTUFF SITUATION IS SERIOUS at present but some improvement is expected as a result of anticipated increases in wheat and corn production this year. The feedstuff shortage, together with the low reserve stocks of meat at the beginning of the war, forced heavy slaughterings of cattle and hogs. Especially significant is the fact that considerable numbers of breeding stock were slaughtered. Sheep numbers, however, seem to have increased, due probably to the high price of wool and the comparative ease of feeding sheep.

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Part II - FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE

AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

ALABAMA PLANNING COMMITTEES MAKE LABOR AND HOUSING SURVEY: Land Use Planning committees in 12 counties of Alabama's Coosa Valley district recently completed a labor and housing survey of the region in regard to the planned TNT and bag-loading plant to be built at Childersburg. The survey was conducted on a cooperative basis, along the lines of the cooperative survey last fall at Radford, Va. A volunteer census showed 22,000 persons in some 24,000 families who said they hoped to get jobs either in construction work or in the munitions factory. The plant is expected to employ about 7,000 persons. The survey showed also that about 16,000 of the 24,000 homes were substandard. From a housing point of view, the Coosa Valley is rated as one of the poorest in the country. Land acquisition experts of the Soil Conservation Service are at work now in the region optioning land for the factory site.

EXTENSION FILM TO PORTRAY 4-H CLUBS IN LATIN-AMERICA: The Motion Picture Division of the Extension Service is producing a film this year planned to encourage organization of farm youths in the two Americas in groups similar to our 4-H Clubs. Raymond Evens, head of the Division, and Cameraman C. A. Carrello are attending the annual conference of the Cuban 4-C Clubs, at Colon, Cuba, filming material for the picture. The 4-C Clubs are the Cuban counterpart of our 4-H Clubs. Other representatives of the Division have returned from Puerto Rico after "shooting" 4-H Club activities there. When completed, the film will portray the activities of all existing farm youth organizations in this hemisphere, namely, the 4-H Clubs of the U. S. and Puerto Rico, the 4-C's of Cuba, the Five-V's of Venezuela, and probably the Boys and Girls Farm Clubs of Canada. The Extension Service reports a growing interest in the 4-H/^{Club}idea in Latin America.

FSA WILL ASSIST IN DEFENSE HOUSING PROGRAM: The Farm Security Administration, because of its experience in the low-cost housing field, has been designated by Federal Works Administrator John M. Carmody to assist in the defense housing program. Last week, FSA officials announced the letting of contracts for constructing 100 houses for defense workers in the town of Radford, Va., near the new Hercules Powder Plant. The houses are built as a part of a long-time plan. Surveys have shown that the town of Radford can easily use these 100 units after the emergency is past. An additional 100 houses will be built on farms near the powder plant. These will be used by workers now and taken over by farm people later. FSA also will build another 150 houses for workers at Puleski, Va., which is in the Radford area.

FSA ANNOUNCED PREVIOUSLY that it had contracted for the purchase of 2,035 trailers to be used as "stopgap" housing in seven crowded defense areas. Funds were allocated to FSA by the President because of the agency's experience in mobile housing -- a part of its migrant worker program. FSA also is handling construction of dormitories for single men engaged in defense work in these crowded areas. Either trailers or dormitories or both are being spotted at the following congested areas: San Diego, Calif.; Bremerton, Wash.; Nashville, Tenn.; Wilmington, N. C.; Orange, Texas; New London, Conn.; Sidney, N. Y.; Erie, Pa.; and Baltimore, Md.

SUMMARY OF FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS: ARGENTINA: The Ministry of Agriculture announced that a credit of 160,000,000 pesos (\$47,637,000) is being negotiated with the Spanish Government and that pending the settlement of final details the immediate delivery of 29,347 metric tons (1,078,000 bushels) of wheat to Spain had been authorized. This latter action is attributed to the urgency of beginning shipments at once. The sale to Spain of 400,000 tons (14,697,000 bushels) of wheat is anticipated under this credit, as well as the exportable surplus of the current cotton crop estimated at 40,000 metric tons (185,000 bales). Consideration is also being given to the sale of other products under this credit.

PORTUGAL: Despite increased demands occasioned by the influx of refugees the Portuguese authorities have not considered it necessary to impose food rationing. Thus far, supplies of foodstuffs in general have been adequate to meet domestic requirements. Foreign purchases of such products as butter and eggs have caused only temporary shortages at times. Poor agricultural conditions or reduced foodstuff imports in 1941, however, would necessitate rationing.

UNITED KINGDOM: The civilian wool ration for the period March 1 to June 30 is estimated by the trade at about half the February-November allocations. Firms doing work for war needs or for export will get 100 percent of their requirements. Rations for firms producing for domestic civilian requirements range from 17.5 to 20 percent of pre-war consumption. It is anticipated that more firms will concentrate on export business because of the reduced domestic market.

NEW ZEALAND: The large domestic meat surplus which will result from heavy curtailment of normal United Kingdom purchases in 1941 is causing concern. Consultations have been held with Australia with a view to adoption of measures to meet the problem. Measures already taken or under consideration include increase of storage facilities, effecting economies in shipping space by new cutting and packing methods, shipments to new export markets, and expansion of the domestic meat canning industry. The New Zealand Government has agreed to purchase all of the exportable meat surplus of the season (October-September).

SPAIN: Representatives of the Spanish and British Governments signed in Madrid an extension of the clearing agreement between the two countries. It is understood that the British will receive from Spain some 12,000 flasks of mercury (total Spanish production now estimated at 85,000 to 95,000 flasks per annum) and 800,000 half cases of sweet oranges. Spain in turn will receive wheat and rubber from the United Kingdom.

CHINA, MANCHURIA AND JAPAN: Indications point to increased acreage of wheat and growing conditions to date indicate a larger crop in 1941 than in 1940. It is believed, however, that the supply of wheat that will move into commercial channels will be below that of 1940 because of the acute rice shortage. Existing commercial stocks of domestic wheat are very low in all three regions due to increased consumption as a result of the rice shortage, small imports, and reduced deliveries from the interior by farmers.

